तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Issue No. 80 *Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications*

13 June 2004 *Śrī Yoginī Ekādaśī*, 10 *Vāmana*, 518 *Gaurābda* Circulation 1,595

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Sannyasa is for Preaching

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Especially in this age, Kali-yuga, it is advised that no one take *sannyāsa*.

aśvamedhaṁ gavālambhaṁ sannyāsaṁ pala-paitṛkam
devareṇa sutotpattiṁ kalau pañca vivarjayet

[*Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa* 185.180 quoted in *Cc. ādi* 17.164]

From this we can understand that in this age the *sannyāsa-āśrama* is forbidden because people are not strong. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu showed us an example in taking *sannyāsa* at the age of twenty-four years, but even Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya advised Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to be extremely careful because He had taken *sannyāsa* at an early age. For preaching we give young boys *sannyāsa*, but actually it is being experienced that they are not fit for *sannyāsa*. There is no harm, however, if one thinks that he is unfit for *sannyāsa*; if he is very much agitated sexually, he should go to the *āśrama* where sex is allowed, namely the *gṛhastha-āśrama*.

— Purport to *Bhāg*. 8.2.30

So this *sannyāsa* order, although it is prohibited in this age, because so many rascals will accept *sannyāsa* and do all nonsense things, therefore *sannyāsa* is prohibited. Just like nowadays in Kali-yuga, some *sannyāsī*s are eating meat — disastrous. This kind of rascal *sannyāsa* is prohibited in the *śāstra* — *sannyāsaṁ pala-paitṛkam, devareṇa sutotpattiṁ kalau pañca vivarjayet*. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the *vaiṣṇava-ācāryas* took *sannyāsa* for preaching work, not for doing rascaldom.

... This is our life. Everyone should take *sannyāsa*. But because it is Kali-yuga, it is restricted because it is very difficult. But as far as possible we have to preach Krishna consciousness. Although it is a little difficult, we should practice it, especially those who are in Krishna consciousness movement, and for preaching work we should take *sannyāsa*.

— *Sannyāsa* Initiation Lecture. Calcutta, 26 January 1973.

In Kali-yuga it is very difficult to follow the rules and regulation of a *sannyāsī*, therefore it is better not to accept *sannyāsa*. For that reason in the *śāstra* it is forbidden in this age — *sannyāsaṁ pala-paitṛkam devareṇa sutotpattiṁ kalau pañca vivarjayet*. Instead of becoming a false *sannyāsī*, do not accept *sannyāsa*. This is the injunction of the *śāstra*. For preaching work, we have to take the help of some *sannyāsī*, but we should remember that we are in Kali-yuga. We should not sentimentally be very much anxious, "Please give me *sannyāsa*, give me *sannyāsa!*" — and then fall down and go to hell. That is not good. If one is able to strictly follow the *sannyāsa* rules and regulations, then he should take. Otherwise, Krishna has said that real *sannyāsa* means one who does not take any remuneration for

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his service to Krishna. *Anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ sa sannyāsī* [*Bg.* 4.1]. "It is my duty. I am the eternal servant of Krishna. To serve Krishna is my duty. *Kāryam* — I must do it." Actually, that mentality is *sannyāsa*. It doesn't matter whether we have changed our dress or not. If we decide, "I am the eternal servant of Krishna. My only duty is to serve Krishna," that is *sannyāsa*.

Better we should try to stay in this determination than to accept the *sannyāsa* order by changing our dress, and then again we fall down. That is not very good.

— Lecture on *Bhāg*. 5.6.2. Vrindavan, 24 November 1976.

It is sometimes said that Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu disapproved of the acceptance of the *sannyāsa* order in this Kali-yuga, because in the *śāstra* it is said:

aśvamedhaṁ gavālambhaṁ sannyāsaṁ pala-paitṛkam
devareṇa sutotpattiṁ kalau pañca vivarjayet

In this Age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of sannyāsa, the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man's begetting children in his brother's wife.

Nevertheless, we see that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself accepted *sannyāsa* and approved of the *sannyāsa* of His elder brother, Visvarup. It is clearly said here:

bhāla haila, —— viśvarūpa sannyāsa karila
pitṛ-kula, mātṛ-kula, —— dui uddhārila

Therefore, should we think that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu made contradictory statements? No, actually He did not. It is recommended that one accept *sannyāsa* to dedicate his life for the service of the Lord. Everyone must take that kind of *sannyāsa*, for by accepting such *sannyāsa* one renders the best service to both his paternal and maternal families. But one should not accept the *sannyāsa* order of the *māyāvāda* school, which has practically no meaning. We find many *māyāvādī sannyāsī*s simply loitering in the street thinking themselves Brahman or Narayan, and spending all day and night begging so they can fill their hungry bellies. *Māyāvādī sannyāsī*s have become so degraded that there is a section of them who eat everything, just like hogs and dogs. This type of degraded *sannyāsa* is what is prohibited in this age. Actually, Srila Sankaracharya's principles for the acceptance of *sannyāsa* were very strict, but later the *māyāvādī* so-called *sannyāsī*s became degraded because of their false philosophy, which propounds that by accepting *sannyāsa* one becomes Narayan. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu rejected that kind of *sannyāsa*.

— Purport to *Cc. ādi* 15.14

After the Guru Leaves

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Devotee: What happens after the departure of one's guru?

Gour Govinda Swami: Guru means pure devotee, *vaiṣṇava*, a very, very intimate associate of Lord Krishna. In *aprakata līlā*, when he disappears, at that time one should not think that guru is not there. He is always there.

Krishna is always there. If you have eyes, you can see Krishna. *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.38) states:

premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Syamasundar, Krishna Himself, with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.

If you have *bhakti-cakṣu*, the eye of devotion, if you have developed *kṛṣṇa-prema*, then, *yāṅhā yāṅhā netra paḍe tāṅhā kṛṣṇa sphure* — you can see Krishna everywhere. [*Cc. ādi* 4.85]. How could Prahlad Maharaja see Krishna in a stone pillar when his father couldn't? Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.30), *tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi, sa ca me na praṇaśyati* — "My devotee always sees Me and I always see him."

Krishna is always there. Krishna is always speaking. Krishna is always teaching. But one may ask, how He is there? How He is speaking? How is He teaching?

Mahaprabhu instructs Sanatan Goswami (*Cc. madhya* 20.123):

'śāstra-guru-ātma'-rūpe āpanāre jānāna
'kṛṣṇa mora prabhu, trātā'——jīvera haya jñāna

Krishna speaks through *śāstra*, Vedic scripture. The Vedas come from Krishna. He is the source of Veda. But what He says in the Vedas is very difficult to understand. It should be understood by *tattva-vicāra*, absolute consideration, not *aparā-vicāra*, apparent consideration. *Māyāvādīs* see only the apparent consideration.

In Your Heart

Then comes the question of guru. Guru, the spiritual master, is the representative of Krishna.

He is a very dear devotee of Krishna, who is *caitya-guru*, seated in the heart as Supersoul. The spiritual master is always there. Don't think that he is not physically present, that he is not there. He is there. He is always there. If you have developed love for the spiritual master, if you have developed that eye, then you can see him, you can talk to him, and he is also present in the form of books. *Vāṇī–rupa*, his instructions are there.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.23) states:

nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahudhā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām

You cannot understand the absolute truth through your own mundane scholarship, your own mundane intelligence. *Medhayā* — nor can you understand it by listening to many lectures by *karmīs, jñānīs* and *yogīs*. Those who are not devotees, who never come under a bona fide disciplic succession, cannot know it.

Then how can you know? *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says, *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām* — *ātmā* here means *paramātmā*, the Supersoul who is seated in everyone's heart. Assuming a body, He personally comes as spiritual master to teach *paramātmā-tattva*. He is *caitya-guru*. Unless He speaks, you cannot understand.

Where does he appear? Who meets him? That is another question. When an individual person is very, very inquisitive, very eager to understand all these things, the *paramātmā* knows, "Oh, now he is very eager to understand Me, so I must help him." So He comes, assuming the body of guru. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 19.151) states:

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja

After wandering through so many planetary systems, undergoing so many species of life, such a person who meets a bona fide spiritual master is most fortunate, *bhāgyavān*. It is Krishna's mercy, *kṛṣṇa kṛpāte guru mile guru kṛpāte kṛṣṇa mile* — by Krishna's mercy you get a bona fide spiritual master, and by the mercy of the spiritual master you get Krishna. *Paramātmā* arranges that meeting. So we must be very eager, very inquisitive, as Dhruva Maharaja was, to get the Lord. *Paramātmā* arranged for Narada Muni to appear before him. "All right, he is very eager now. You go and show him the path, help him."

Mercy Through Instructions

Similarly, for that disciple who is crying, "Oh, my spiritual master has disappeared. How can I be helped? Who will teach me? How I can know? His *vāṇī* is there, his instructions, books are there, but I cannot understand the purport. Although the *vāṇī* is there, it is very difficult for me to understand it." When you become very, very inquisitive. *Śāstra* has its mercy. Kaviraj Goswami has said (*Cc. madhya* 20.120):

sādhu-śāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha haya
sei jīva nistare, māyā tāhāre chāḍaya

If, by the blessings of a pure devotee and the scripture, a conditioned soul becomes devoted to Krishna, he becomes liberated; *māyā* gives him up.

Śāstra is also one of the incarnations of the Lord. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 24.318) says, *kṛṣṇa-tulya bhāgavata vibhu, sarvāśraya. Bhāgavata-grantha*, the scripture, is like Krishna. Krishna is *vibhu*, the all-powerful Supreme Lord. *Bhāgavata* is also all-powerful. We take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna, and we must also take shelter of *bhāgavata-grantha*. If Krishna showers His mercy, and *grantha* and *sādhu* shower their mercy — *sādhu-śāstra-kṛpā* — then we will be attracted to Krishna. *sei jīva nistare māyā tāhāre chāḍaya* — Then we will be free from the clutches of *māyā*. So, *grantha*, scripture, has its *kṛpā*. This is one of the forms of the lord.

And the instruction of guru is also guru. You'll get *guru-kṛpā* through his instructions, *vāṇī*. One who is very, very eager and very, very inquisitive, prays to his spiritual master, "O my spiritual master, you have departed. You are not physically present, so I cannot understand. I am such an ignorant fool. I have no qualification. Though your instructions are there, I cannot understand what you have said. Please help me."

In Another Form

So guru will also come, but not in the same form. He may come in the form of a *sādhu*, a very dear devotee, who is also very dear to your spiritual master. Through him this will be revealed. Doubts will be cleared. Through him you will be able to understand *tattva*, purport. You should think, "My guru is teaching me, he is speaking to me in this form." Don't think, "My guru is not here. He has departed. What shall I do?" Pray fervently to your spiritual master. He must help you. We have personal experience. We have been helped in this way. Also, the great *mahājanas, ācāryas*, they have also said this.

This is an eternal process. Krishna is eternal, and His teachings are eternal. The process is also eternal. It is always going on. But we should be very, very inquisitive. Inquisitiveness must be there. One should not feel desperate. There is nothing pessimistic in this process. It is all optimism.

Maintaining Eagerness

Question: I was eager to have guru. Now I have guru, but how do I maintain this constant eagerness?

Gour Govinda Swami: You must maintain it by thinking, "Out of Krishna's mercy I met my guru. But how I can get always the association of my guru?" You should be very eager to always have the association of guru and listen to him. Unless you listen to your guru, your doubts cannot be dispelled. If you cannot get the mercy of guru, you cannot get Krishna. So you should be very, very eager, "How can I best serve my guru and please him?" *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo, yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi* — If gurudeva is pleased, then Krishna will be pleased and you will get Krishna's mercy. If gurudeva is displeased, then where is your position, where is your place, *gatiḥ kuto 'pi?* So, our concern, our duty, is to please the spiritual master. How is that done?

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya,
āra nā kariha mane āśā

One should carry out the orders of the spiritual master. Gurudeva has many instructions. Some of his instructions are general, and some are specific. General instructions are for everyone. Specific instructions are what he tells specific, individual disciples. One should be especially eager to follow the individual instructions that gurudeva gave to you. One should think, "Gurudeva has ordered me to do this. How can I best do it? How can I best please my spiritual master? How can I best serve him, and please him? Doing so I will get the mercy of Krishna. Otherwise *janama biphala*, my life is unsuccessful."

"I Have Not Gotten!"

If one always thinks like that, then one can maintain that constant eagerness. *vaiṣṇava kṛpā taha sarva siddhi* — If you get the mercy of a *vaiṣṇava*, pure devotee, or guru, then you can have all perfection, *sarva siddhi*. One should think, "Oh, I can't do anything. I'm such a wretched, unqualified, unworthy person! I cannot render any service to my guru. I cannot please him. I have not gotten anything. I have not gotten the mercy of my guru. I have not pleased him. I have not taken advantage of meeting my guru. Oh, what shall I do? I have not done anything. I do not have the mercy of guru! How can I get his mercy?" You should always think like that. If you are satisfied and think, "Oh, I have guru. I have pleased him. I have gotten his mercy," then everything is finished! It means you have not gotten it. This is how you can maintain eagerness. Otherwise, it is not possible.

— *Darśana*, 18 July 1986, Paris, France.

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:
Gopal Jiu Publications
c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir
National Highway No. 5, IRC Village
Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India, 751015
Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026
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Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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TRAVELERS MEETING AT AN INN

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam *11.17.53-54*

putra-dārāpta-bandhūnāṁ saṅgamaḥ pāntha-saṅgamaḥ
anu-dehaṁ viyanty ete svapno nidrānugo yathā

The association of children, wife, relatives, and friends is just like the brief meeting of travelers. With each change of body, one is separated from all such associates, just as one loses the objects one possesses in a dream when the dream is over.

itthaṁ parimṛśan mukto gṛheṣv atithi-vad vasan
na gṛhair anubadhyeta nirmamo nirahaṅkṛtaḥ

Deeply considering the actual situation, a liberated soul should live at home just like a guest, without any sense of proprietorship or false ego. In this way he will not be bound or entangled by domestic affairs.

— Krishna Dvaipayan Vyasadev. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. English translation and commentary by the humble servants of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles. 1985.